

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 2: PREPARING FOR THE SSCR PROCESS

2.1 IMPLEMENTING SSCR: A TEAM APPROACH	2-1
2.1.1 THE REGISTRAR’S OFFICE	2-1
2.1.2 THE DATA PROCESSING DEPARTMENT	2-1
2.1.3 THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.....	2-2
2.1.4 THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE	2-2
2.1.5 THE PRESIDENT	2-2
2.2 DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN.....	2-3
2.3 DATA PROCESSING RESPONSIBILITIES.....	2-5
2.3.1 WHAT ED/NSLDS PROVIDES.....	2-5
2.3.2 WHAT YOUR SCHOOL PROVIDES.....	2-5
2.4 SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS	2-7
2.4.1 NOTICE OF CRIMINAL LIABILITY.....	2-7

PREPARING FOR THE SSCR PROCESS

The SSCR process, through NSLDS, reduces the paperwork burden on your school as the primary source of enrollment status information for students with outstanding Title IV loans. This chapter helps you plan for implementing SSCR, so that the transition to full automation proceeds smoothly.

2.1 IMPLEMENTING SSCR: A TEAM APPROACH

Unlike other elements of the student aid system, the SSCR process involves more than the Financial Aid Office. The certification of enrollment status crosses traditional administrative boundaries, affecting multiple “jurisdictions.” Together, these jurisdictions form the SSCR implementation team. The members of this team are described below.

2.1.1 THE REGISTRAR’S OFFICE

The Registrar’s Office or the Registration Officer (hereafter referred to as the Registrar) typically maintains key data needed for student enrollment status confirmation. Therefore, at most large institutions, the Registrar is the administrative department responsible for SSCR reporting and certification. Sometimes the Financial Aid Office or another department assumes that role. No matter which office processes the data, however, the Registrar must participate in the SSCR process by allowing access to the key data. Cooperation between the Registrar and the rest of the SSCR team is clearly essential to successfully implementing NSLDS SSCR.

2.1.2 THE DATA PROCESSING DEPARTMENT

The campus data processing or administrative computing department, or a computer systems staff dedicated to the Registrar or Financial Aid Office, is also a chief player on the SSCR implementation team. Computing support is required for:

- Establishing telecommunication links to the Title IV Wide Area Network (WAN), which links schools and agencies to ED computer facilities, in order to exchange data files
- Initial development and testing of software that matches the SSCR Roster File to your school’s student registration files, and that check the updated Roster File (called the Submittal File) for errors before returning it to NSLDS
- Software maintenance
- Ongoing processing of the SSCR files

The data processing department must understand the business and federally mandated requirements to support the new SSCR system, so that the department allocates sufficient resources to the project.

If your school is too small to support the computing requirements internally, you may contract with a servicer. The servicer will play the same role as a campus data processing department and should be considered part of the team. However, if your school does use a servicer, your school is still responsible for complying with SSCR reporting requirements and is itself liable to sanctions if your servicer fails to comply.

2.1.3 THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

If you are participating in SSCR for the first time, you may need to seek supplemental funding, especially for initial development. At most schools, discretionary (non-budgeted) funds are controlled by the chief financial officer (CFO). You should make sure the CFO knows the business advantages of SSCR automation and the federally mandated requirement to participate if any attending students have Title IV loans.

2.1.4 THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

The Financial Aid Office stands to benefit by the successful automation of SSCR regardless of whether its role in SSCR is active or passive (depending on the Registrar's role). If the Financial Aid Office performs the actual SSCR processing, labor costs are reduced and accuracy increases. If another department performs the processing, the Financial Aid Office indirectly benefits from the school meeting its Title IV responsibilities in a timely manner and at a quality level.

2.1.5 THE PRESIDENT

Ideally, the offices and departments directly involved in the SSCR process coordinate the entire effort, without the president's intervention. However, by signing the program participation agreement, the president has committed the entire institution—not just the Financial Aid Office or the Registrar—to achieving and maintaining compliance with all federal requirements, one of which is the timely submission of SSCR data. So the president and appropriate vice presidents may be able to help achieve interdepartmental cooperation in implementing the SSCR system.

2.2 DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

Successfully implementing the SSCR process requires not only intra-institutional cooperation, but also good planning. While your school's action plan will differ in its details from those of other schools, all will have common elements. Use the information in the next section as a baseline to get started.

Action Plan Outline

To participate in the SSCR process, you must begin with the following steps. The next chapter explains the SSCR reporting cycle in more detail.

1. Sign-up for ED's Title IV WAN. If your school does not already participate in Title IV WAN, call Title IV WAN Customer Service at 1-800-615-1189 for enrollment information, forms, and the *Title IV WAN User's Guide*. Follow the application instructions and be sure to note that you want to participate in NSLDS and SSCR. If your school cannot support the Title IV WAN requirements internally, choose a servicer.
2. Choose a primary contact person at your school for SSCR-related matters.
3. Determine how you will update your school's records with the SSCR files. You can choose:
 - Batch processing on a PC or mainframe using software that your school developed
 - Batch processing and individual record updates using EDEExpress software
 - Direct online processing using NET*CONNECT software
 - Using a servicer
4. Determine how you will receive and send the SSCR files. You can use:
 - Title IV WAN from a PC using the Store-and-Forward batch transmission facility (Section 3.2.2.1 describes the Store-and-Forward process)
 - Title IV WAN from a mainframe computer using the Store-and-Forward facility
 - Magnetic tape reel or cartridge
 - A servicer

Read the Overview of Data Transmission in the next chapter for information that will help you decide among these methods.

5. Choose your SSCR reporting schedule. Read Scheduling SSCR Cycles in the next chapter for federal reporting requirements and guidelines.
6. Establish Title IV WAN communication between your computer system and NSLDS. Complete the SSCR User Profile for your school, which lets you specify your contact person, servicer (if any), data transmission method, and SSCR reporting schedule.
7. Download the SSCR file using the message class SSCRYYP.
8. Update the required fields and return the roster to NSLDS using message class SSCRYYPIN.

2.3 DATA PROCESSING RESPONSIBILITIES

Your school and ED (through NSLDS) each assume different responsibilities in automating the SSCR process. This section outlines what ED provides through NSLDS and what your school is expected to provide in the way of data processing resources and capabilities.

2.3.1 WHAT ED/NSLDS PROVIDES

NSLDS provides the data processing components listed below:

- **Comprehensive Specifications**—The specifications for SSCR data exchange include the following:
 - *File and record layouts* for all files exchanged between NSLDS and the schools. The file and record layouts are described in Chapter Five.
 - *Field definitions* for all fields in the SSCR records, including each field’s description, data type, size, reporting requirements, and position within the record; error checks (“edits”) to be applied; and comments about the use of the data or special characteristics caused by certain conditions. The field definitions are listed in Chapter Five.
- **Network Access**—The network provides access through the Title IV WAN software (for mainframes and PCs) for transmitting electronic files to and from Title IV WAN’s Store-and-Forward facility.
- **PC-based Software**—EDEXpress is the software used for updating SSCR records on your PC. It will be sent to you when you apply for Title IV WAN.
- **Online Access**—A PC provides online access through the Title IV WAN software for real-time updates to NSLDS.
- **SSCR Roster Files**—These files are sent on a recurring basis.
- **SSCR Error Notification Files**—These files are sent as needed.
- **A User Profile Function**—This function lets schools control SSCR scheduling, their designated contact person, and the transmission medium for exchanging files.

2.3.2 WHAT YOUR SCHOOL PROVIDES

Schools are responsible for providing the data processing components listed below:

- **Software**—For batch processing on a PC or mainframe, you must provide software to format your registration files to match the SSCR files. In a mainframe environment, you must provide software to read the SSCR files received from NSLDS, match SSCR Detail Records against enrollment or registration files, update each student's enrollment status, add appropriate dates and new or changed student identification data, and create output files for return to NSLDS. You may match and update the records manually, but you must then transmit the updated files electronically.
- **Hardware and Operating System Software**—You must choose a PC or mainframe environment and provide the appropriate hardware and operating system software. See the *Title IV WAN User's Guide* to help determine minimum requirements and recommended configurations.
- **Regular Processing**—You must process the SSCR Roster Files and Error Notification Files, including certification of enrollment status and related information, on a schedule that meets federal requirements. See Chapter Three for SSCR scheduling guidelines and recommendations.
- **Schedule**—You set the schedule that determines when the SSCR Roster is sent to your school.

2.4 SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

The NSLDS database contains information about private citizens that is subject to the provisions of Public Law (PL) 93-579, the Privacy Act of 1974. NSLDS is designed to protect data from both intentional and inadvertent disclosure or destruction. All output from NSLDS computers or terminals (including any output that users may produce) may contain data that is subject to the Privacy Act. Therefore, your school must protect the privacy of this data.

2.4.1 NOTICE OF CRIMINAL LIABILITY

As an authorized user of NSLDS, you are subject to the Privacy Act. An abstract of the Privacy Act is presented below, as a reminder of the criminal liability that accompanies access to and use of the system. The abstract is also a verbatim copy of the statement that your school's representative signs when the school applies for access to NSLDS.

Notice of Criminal Liability Under the Privacy Act

The information provided to me by the Department of Education is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. The protection of this information, once entrusted to me, becomes my responsibility. Therefore, I agree to protect the privacy of all information that has been provided to me as an agent of the Department. I understand that the criminal penalties identified below may be enforced if I violate the requirements of the Privacy Act.

5 U.S.C. § 552a, as amended,

(i)(1) Any officer or employee of an agency, who by virtue of his employment or official position, has possession of, or access to, agency records which contain individually identifiable information the disclosure of which is prohibited by this section or by rules or regulations established thereunder, and who knowing that disclosure of the specific material is so prohibited, willfully discloses the material in any manner to any person or agency not entitled to receive it, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(2) Any officer or employee of any agency who willfully maintains a system of records without meeting the notice requirements of subsection (e) (4) of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(3) Any person who knowingly and willfully requests or obtains any record concerning an individual from an agency under false pretenses shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

I certify that I have read and understand the criminal penalties of the Privacy Act, as stated above, and that I agree to comply with the government's requirements for the protection of any information covered by the Privacy Act.

Source: The Privacy Act of 1974 (as amended)